CHAPTER 13

Specifying the HTML Version and Document Title

In This Chapter

Understanding version information

Establishing the document title

Including version information is very important to ensure that your HTML coding runs properly. This chapter explains why that is and how to write the version information. Also important to your Web page, and covered in this chapter, is the document title. Read on to learn why these two items are key to the success of your Web page.

Version Information

One part of your page isn't HTML at all—it's SGML. This is the first line of your file, which should contain version information. If you use an HTML editor, you will notice it may add the version information (or its best guess at the version information) to the beginning of your document. The version information tells the browser what set of rules to use when rendering the page. It won't recognize elements that aren't in the specification you use.

You can choose from three version statements in HTML 4:

1. **Strict.** This definition includes non-frames documents and none of the deprecated elements. If you choose to use this one, you must have extremely clean HTML.

```
<!DOCTYPE HTML PUBLIC "-//W3C//DTD HTML
4.01//EN"
"http://www.w3.org/TR/html4/strict.dtd">
```

2. **Transitional.** This definition includes deprecated elements (the way people used to write HTML) and all the new HTML elements, but no frames elements. This is the one to use if you don't think you can control yourself or if you have to use deprecated elements to support a large base of visitors who will come from older versions of browsers.

```
<!DOCTYPE HTML PUBLIC "-//W3C//DTD HTML 4.01
Transitional//EN" "http://www.w3.org/TR/html4/loose.dtd">
```

3. **Frames.** This definition is the one you need to use if you use any of the frames elements. It also includes all the elements in the transitional version. This is the most flexible and you should use it if you don't know what you might put into your page.

```
<!DOCTYPE HTML PUBLIC "-//W3C//DTD HTML 4.01 Frameset//EN"
"http://www.w3.org/TR/html4/frameset.dtd">
```

Document Title

The TITLE element is an important, and often overlooked, part of every document. Since the title you choose is displayed in the title bar of browsers accessing the document but not in the document itself, it needs to be short. However, it also needs to be descriptive, since it's the default shortcut name when that page is bookmarked.

The title is created with the TITLE element, as described below.

Title <TITLE>

Start Tag: Required

End Tag: Required

Content: Description of document, but no elements are permitted

Attributes: lang: add the desired language for the browser to read

dir: select a direction for text to be read. For example, Arabic reads right to left.

Since the title is used in indexing by Web engines and robots, it pays off to include substantive and descriptive terms in the title. It's a sign of incompleteness to see a Web page that has no title displayed, so be sure you take the time to include one.

From Here

Jump to Chapter 24 to learn how to test and validate your HTML.

Continue to Chapter 14 and learn about specifying metadata.

Summary

In this chapter, you learned how to include version information appropriate to the strictness of the HTML coding you've done. You also learned how to specify your document's title, and why it's an important element for your pages.

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